



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016188

Address: 414 Northeast Ravenna Boulevard

Applicant: Paroline and Associates

Date of Meeting: Monday, 3 March 2014

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley
Joe Hurley
Christina Pizana
Martine Zettle

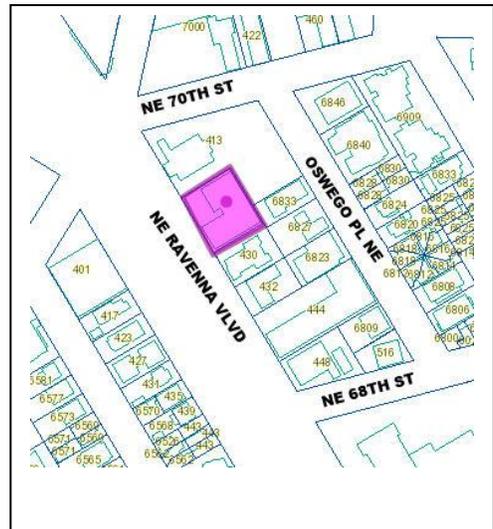
Board Members Absent: Salone Habibuddin

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Two with a 40' height limit. (NC2 40).

Zoning Pattern: The site lies within a NC2 and NC3 with 40' and 60' height limits designated area that forms the Green Lake commercial district, an area within the Green Lake Residential Urban Village. To the east and south, the zoning transitions to multi-family Lowrise (LR3) zoning which extends to I-5.



Lot Area: 11,000 sq. ft. A mostly flat site with a declension of six feet on its south portion.

Current Development: Surface parking lot.

Access: NE Ravenna Blvd.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: Located within the Green Lake Residential Urban Village, the site's neighbors include apartment and condominium dwellings, mixed-use structures and commercial buildings. To the north, the Florera, a four-story condominium, contains 59 units and street level retail including a Key Bank and smaller retail tenants. The Florera wraps around the northeast corner of the subject site. Directly south lies an eight unit apartment building followed by a mixed-use condominium with 13 units and street level commercial space. To the east lies a one-story wood frame apartment building. Across Ravenna Blvd. sits a retail strip building with a Thai restaurant, dry cleaners and a small pharmacy.

Recently built projects in the neighborhood include the predominately metal clad Circa Green Lake, the Green Lake with its concave plaza and the nearly complete Green Lake Village to house a new PCC grocery.

Ravenna Boulevard forms a gracious tree lined entry into the heart of the Green Lake neighborhood. It joins Woodlawn Ave N and Green Lake Dr. which partially circles the lake.

ECAs: No mapped environmental critical area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story mixed use structure containing 62 residential units above commercial space and a live/work unit at ground level. Parking for 16 vehicles to be provided in a below grade parking garage.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant illustrated nine variations for the building footprint. In each of the three massing scenarios presented at the EDG meeting, three floors of residences rest on a plinth housing commercial space, a live work unit, and access to a below grade garage. If one imagines a mostly cubic form placed on the site, Scheme One removes the northeast and southwest corners above the first level creating two open terraces at the second floor. The northeast terrace would be nearly contiguous with the Florera courtyard. A double loaded corridor with a dog leg

allows residential units to face east and west. Circulation towers occur at the north and edges of the building. A more traditional courtyard scheme, Scheme Two has a central open space or large light well at the second level with stairs and elevators situated at the north and south ends.

The third proposal carves an entry plaza off Ravenna Boulevard with wings of the building flanking it. The schematic site plan illustrates an eight foot setback from the west property line and a five foot setback at the south end. On the north, the façade setback varies from the south wall of the Florera. The central court congregates entries for the lobby of the residential units, the commercial space and the live/work unit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Seven members of the public affixed their names to the EDG sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following issues:

Massing

- The project will have a significant and unacceptable impact on the Florera's courtyard. There needs to be a massing study showing the proposal pulled back from the courtyard.
- Shift all of the building mass to the street to eliminate the impact on the Florera.
- Additionally, shift the building to the south away from the Florera.
- The structure should have more modulation.
- The eight foot setback is too little.
- The proposal annihilates solar access.

Materials

- The design doesn't fit the Green Lake area. Prefer the use of stone, brick and warm colors. Don't use metal. The fire station is stone.
- Create a warm building. Use brick.
- This is an exciting project. The generous amount of glass and the modern appearance are positive.

Parking

- The proposal does not have adequate parking for the number of units.

Programming

- Retail has difficulty surviving in this area.
- Live/work units do not encourage pedestrian activity.
- 60 dwelling units are too many.
- Live/work unit is de facto housing. Don't allow it.
- The building has too much density. This should be a 25 unit project.

Safety

- Safety is an issue. There is a school and a PCC opening nearby.
- Pedestrian safety is important.

Other

- When the building on the subject site was torn down for the parking, the grade was significantly raised with fill.
- More analysis is needed.
- Where will the ventilation of the garage and potential restaurant cooking occur?

- The building has too small of scale to provide adequate pedestrian amenities.
- Homeless people will sleep in the open plaza. Due to the nearby bus stop, the area attracts transients.

DPD also received a letter concerning the lack of parking in the Green Lake and Roosevelt neighborhoods. The author urged increased amounts of parking in the proposed building.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Lakefront Orientation:** In areas adjacent to Green Lake Park the building should be sited to acknowledge and orient to the lake and park.
- **Views of Lake:** Numerous streets offer views of, and pedestrian access to, the lake. Consider siting the building to take advantage of these views and to enhance views from the public right-of-way. Methods to accomplish this include setting the building back from lake views, placing landscape elements and street trees to frame views rather than block them, and providing pedestrian spaces with views of the lake.
- **Curved and Discontinuous Streets:** The community’s street pattern responds to the lake by breaking with the city’s standard north-south and east-west grid pattern. This creates numerous discontinuous streets, street offsets, and curved streets, which are an aspect of the community character. New development can take advantage of such street patterns by providing special features that complement these unique spaces.
- **Entry Locations:** Within the Green Lake Planning Area, certain locations serve as entry points into neighborhood and commercial areas. Development of properties at these “Entry Locations” should include elements suggesting an entry or gateway. Examples include a clock tower, turret or other architectural features, kiosks, benches, signage, landscaping, public art or other features that contribute to the demarcation of the area.

- **Heart Locations:** Several important intersections have been identified as “Heart Locations”. Heart Locations differ from Entry Locations in that they are intersections that serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity. Development at Heart Locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. In addition to promoting pedestrian activity, these sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A building’s primary entry and facade should face the intersection. Other amenities to consider are: special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. Developers should review programmed public improvements listed in the Green Lake 20/20 Plan.

The discrete forecourt flanked by building wall along Ravenna Boulevard has the potential of creating a gracious sense of entry and a recognition of the boulevard’s significance.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

A continuous street wall is an important design consideration within Green Lake’s commercial and mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented areas.

- **Aurora Avenue North:** A continuous street wall is less of a consideration on Aurora Avenue N, where numerous parking lots punctuate the streetscape. In this area, a more pleasant and consistent streetscape can be achieved by reinforcing the rhythm of alternating buildings and well-landscaped vehicle access areas. Parking lots should be placed at the rear and to the sides of buildings, and the buildings should be located near the street. Parking lot landscaping and screening are particularly important in improving the appearance of the Aurora Avenue North corridor.
- **Multifamily Residential Areas:** Landscaping in the required front setbacks of new multifamily development is an important siting and design consideration to help reinforce desirable streetscape continuity.

As illustrated on p. 19 of the EDG booklet (elevation study), the architect intends to create a nearly continuous street wall aligned with the Florera in accordance with the guideline. The Board agreed with this aspiration.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

Review the lobby’s location as directed in the guidance for A-4.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

Pedestrian activity is a high priority in the Green Lake business areas. It is recognized, however, that within commercial zones, the appropriateness of traditional storefronts

may depend upon location, adjacent properties and the type of street on which the development fronts. In the case of a mixed-use building, for example, at the intersection of an arterial and a residential street, it might be more appropriate to place non-storefront commercial facades on the quieter residential street. In such cases, the following can contribute to a commercial facade that exhibits a character and presence that achieves a sensitive transition from commercial to residential uses:

- slightly less transparency than a standard storefront window;
- recessed entries;
- landscaping along the building base and entry; and
- minimized glare from exterior lighting.

The Board urged the applicant to maximize the amount of commercial space directly along the street frontage. Consider the following changes: reducing the garage width, locating the lobby at the back of the plaza and eliminating the live/work unit for added commercial space.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

After reviewing the site and vicinity zoning, the adjacent buildings and the proposed massing, the Board requested that the applicant modify the proposed structure at the northeast corner to ensure relief for the adjacent Florera courtyard. See guidance for B-1.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Residential Buildings:** Residences on the ground floor should be raised for residents' privacy, if allowed by site conditions. Well landscaped, shallow front yard setbacks are also typical and appropriate.
- **Mixed-Use Buildings:** For mixed-use buildings with residential units over commercial ground floor uses, consider locating the primary residential entry on the side street rather than in the main commercial area. This maintains a continuous commercial storefront while increasing privacy for the residential units.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

The Design Review Board may reduce the amount of open space required by the Land Use Code if the project substantially contributes to the objectives of the guideline by:

- **Creating a substantial courtyard-style open space (see sketch below) that is visually accessible to the public and that extends to the public realm.**

- **Setting back development to improve a view corridor.**
- **Setting upper stories of buildings back to provide solar access and/or to reduce impacts on neighboring single-family residences.**
- **Providing open space within the streetscape or other public rights-of-way contiguous with the site. Such public spaces should be large enough to include streetscape amenities that encourage gathering. For example, a curb bulb with outdoor seating adjacent to active retail would be acceptable.**

Scheme Three appears to meet bullet points one through three. The entry courtyard allows additional units to face Ravenna Boulevard. In general, the entry plaza concept received an endorsement.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

In order to maximize commercial use presence on Ravenna Boulevard, the Board encouraged the applicant to reduce the width of the driveway and garage opening to accommodate more retail or office space. A reduction in width requires a departure request from the land use code.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

Some properties adjacent to Green Lake’s Neighborhood Commercial areas are zoned single-family, but have a small portion zoned Neighborhood Commercial. In general, these properties can only be developed with single-family houses. In such cases where a property with more-intensive zoning is adjacent to a property that contains such split zoning, the following design techniques are encouraged to improve the transition to the split-zoned lot:

- **Building setbacks similar to those specified in the Land Use Code for zone edges where a proposed development project within a more intensive zone abuts a lower intensive zone.**
- **Techniques specified in the Citywide Design Guidelines A-5 and B-1.**

Along a zone edge without an alley, consider additional methods that help reduce the potential 'looming' effect of a much larger structure in proximity to smaller, existing buildings.

- One possibility is allowing the proposed structure's ground floor to be built to the property line and significantly stepping back the upper levels from the adjacent building (see sketch below). The building wall at the property line should be designed in a manner sympathetic to the existing structure(s), particularly regarding privacy and aesthetic issues.

The Board discussed at length the relationships of the proposed setbacks and building mass to the Florera and the smaller apartment building to the rear. The Florera courtyard and its building mass wrap around the subject site's northeast corner. Satisfied with the overall parti or building organization, the Board requested that the applicant adjust or modify the massing as it approaches the Florera courtyard.

The elevation study (p. 19 of the EDG booklet) conveys common datum lines aligned with the Florera project. Common heights for the first floor plinths and the overall structure should provide a unified street wall and complementary massing.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 **Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Distinct Architectural Themes and Styles:** Aurora Avenue North Corridor - Recognize Aurora's 1920-1950 commercial character while making the area more friendly to the pedestrian. Residential Urban Village - Build on the core's classical architectural styles (e.g., community center, library, Marshall School, VFW building). Tangletown (55th/56th Street corridor and Meridian) and 65th/Latona – Build on both commercial areas' human scale elements, particularly the traditional storefront details and proportions of early 1900s vernacular commercial buildings.
- **Signage:** The design and placement of signs plays an important role in the visual character and identity of the community. While regulatory sign review is not in the purview of design review, integration with the overall architectural expression of a building and appropriate scale and orientation are important design considerations. Franchises should not be given exceptions to these guidelines. Except within the Aurora Avenue North corridor, signage should be oriented to pedestrians.
- **Facade Articulation:** Multi-family residential structures - The façade articulation of new multifamily residential buildings (notably in Lowrise zones) should be compatible with the surrounding single-family architectural context. Neighborhood commercial

structures - Modulation in the street-fronting façade of a mixed-use structure is less important when an appropriate level of details is present to break up the facade.

See the Board guidance for C-4.

- C-2 **Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.
- C-3 **Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.
- C-4 **Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Building Materials in Green Lake’s Individual Districts**
 1. Green Lake Residential Urban Village
 2. Tangletown (55th/56th Corridor and Meridian)
 3. 65th at Latona
- **Special material requirements and recommendations**
 1. Metal siding
 2. Masonry units
 3. Wood siding and shingles
- **Discouraged Materials**
 1. Mirrored glass
 2. Sprayed-on finish

The initial concept sketches of the façade with primarily storefront glazing and a heavier upper level of wood and perhaps stone or concrete above the lighter base received praise. Although many of the newer mixed use structures in this portion of Green Lake commercial district possess brick facades, including the adjacent Florera, the Board did not urge its use. The Board requested high quality materials at the Ravenna façade. Members of the Board discouraged the use of cementitious board on the elevation and within the entry court.

- C-5 **Structured Parking Entrances.** The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

The Board encouraged the applicant to narrow the driveway and garage width to increase the amount of linear feet for commercial uses along Ravenna Boulevard, indicating its willingness to recommend a departure from the governing width of driveways in the Land Use Code.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Streetscape amenities:** New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm. The Board would be willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan from, but not limited to: curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces, pedestrian-oriented street lighting, and street furniture.

The design of the forecourt represents a paramount concern for the Board. See guidance for D-7, D-10 and E-3.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

Show the location of the solid waste storage area and diagram how transference occurs. Where will moving vans park? How will tenants access their bikes?

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

The Board briefly discussed the necessity of ensuring a safe entry plaza. Design the plaza with security concerns in mind. Provide good sight lines and adequate lighting.

- D-9 Commercial Signage.** Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

Provide a concept signage plan by the Recommendation meeting.

- D-10 Commercial Lighting.** Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

Ensure that the Recommendation meeting booklet has a concept lighting plan with specification of outdoor fixtures. The front entry plaza should have attractive lighting with the goal of achieving a safe context.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

The Board commended the architect's intention of provide extensive glazing at the storefront level.

E. Landscaping

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

Continue to refine the landscape design of the roof deck. In the Recommendation booklet, provide the type of materials (hardscape and plantings) as well as the type of planters.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Celebrate the Olmsted heritage: Green Lake Park, Ravenna Boulevard and Lower Woodland Park are visible and accessible examples of the Olmsted brothers' design. New development should build on this character by employing informal groupings of large and small trees and shrubs. A mix of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental plant materials is appropriate. Continuous rows of street trees contrasting with the informal, asymmetric landscaping of open spaces are also typical.**

Given the proposed entry plaza's adjacency to the Olmsted Brothers' designed Ravenna Boulevard, the landscape architect should ensure a high quality design and materials that reflect the site's importance.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

Street-level Development Standards SMC.23.47A.008A.3. The Code requires that street-level street-facing facades shall be located within ten feet of the street lot line, unless wider sidewalks, plazas, or other approved landscaped or open spaces are provided. The applicant proposes an entry plaza, approximately 730 square feet facing Ravenna Blvd.

The Board conveyed its interest in a plaza along the right of way. The quality of the plaza is an important consideration.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

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